

Christian Testimony

Born by some of the

PEOPLE OF GOD

In

QUAKERS

IN

LONDON

1683



their Patient suffering the Taking Away of
their Goods for Non-Payment of Tythes to the
Parish Priests.

The Apostle saith, I have coveted no mans Silver, Gold or
Apparel: Ye your selves know, that these Hands have
ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with
me, Acts 20. 34.

And, What say I now then? verily that when I preach
the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without
charge, that I abuse not my Power in the Gospel; for
I might be free from all men, yet have I made my self
servant to all, that I might gain the more, 1 Cor. 9.
19.

LONDON, Printed by Andrew Sowle, 1683.



THE
P R E F A C E
TO THE
R E A D E R

Friendly Reader;

THE following matter being an Account of the distraining and taking away of the Goods of some of us, the People called *Quakers* in the City of *London*, because we refused to pay unto the Parish Priests Tythes or certain Sums of money, in Law called *Tythes*; We, the said People, shall in Christian Tenderness and Plainness render some *Christian Reasons* why we cannot pay or give Tythes to the Parish Priests or Ministers.

First, We are not Unbelieving *Jews*, but Real *Christians*, therefore we cannot give or pay them Tythes. God commanded Tythes to be paid under the Dispensation of the Law, which came by *Moses*, and those Tythes were ordained for the Relief of the Widdows, Fatherless and Strangers, as well as for the Priests. This command for paying and receiving Tythes, as aforesaid, continued in force amongst the *Jews*, till

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our Lord Jesus Christ came in the Flesh, and had offered himself up through the Eternal Spirit; who by his one Offering put an End to the Priesthood of *Aaron* and *Levi*, together with their Temple and Tythes, and all the rest of the Shadowy Offerings and Services: And as the Apostle said, *God disannulled this Commandment for the Weakness and Unprofitableness thereof; for the Law made nothing Perfect, &c.* For such an High Priest becometh us, who is Holy, Harmless, separate from Sinners, &c. see Heb. 7. 18, 19, 26. And again, *The Priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change of the Law*, Vers. 12. So Christ by his One Offering hath Ended this Dispensation of Tything above Sixteen Hundred Years since. But when this Command was in Force, it was only to the Natural Jews, and therefore no Concern of ours, who are by Nature Gentiles.

Secondly, Christ, who ended this Jewish Dispensation of Tything, did not set up Tythes again in the Gospel Dispensation, either among Jews or Gentiles, for the Maintenance of his Ministers, (nor for any other use) but contrary-wise commanded his Ministers, saying, *Freely ye have received, Freely give, &c. and whosoever shall not hear you, nor receive your Words, when you depart out of that House or City, shake off the Dust of your Feet*, Mat. 10. 7, 14. Again, *But into whatsoever City ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you, &c.* But into whatsoever City you enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the Streets of the same, and say, *Even the very Dust of your City, which cleaveth to us, we do wipe off against you*, Luke 10. 8, 10, 11. Thus it plainly appears, that Christ's Command was and is, to preach or minister Freely,

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Freely, as they then had, and such now have, received Freely; and those who are truly his Ministers, do keep this his Command; and such have Power in Christ to eat such as is set before them, by those who do receive them; but not to take Tythes or Sums of Money, for preaching, from those who do not receive, believe nor own their Testimony, nor Sue them at Law, to take away or Spoil their Goods, because they refuse to pay them. This Practice of the aforesaid Priests is contrary to both Law and Gospel. For when the *Jews* broke the Law of God, in not bringing Tythes into his Store-House, we do not read, nor believe, that God did impower Magistrates to give Warrants to the Priests, under the Law, to distrain or take away their Goods for the same, nor to take Double or Treble the Value of the Tythes then Due; nor to Imprison and Oppress the Bodies of such Offenders; neither was it then said, that such Offenders did Rob the Priests, but that they Robbed God; neither were the Priests or Magistrates to punish them for this Robbery; but the Power of punishing of these, the great God reserved in himself, and he Blasted or Cursed the Fruits of the Earth, as a Punishment for their Rebellion, &c. see *Mal. 3. Deut. 28. 38, 39, 40.*

Objection; Some perhaps may object from the Apostles words, on the behalf of the aforesaid Priests of London, and say, *who goeth a warfare any time at his own Charge? Who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the Fruit thereof? Who feedeth a Flock, and eateth not of the Milk of the Flock? If we sow unto you Spiritual Things, is it a great matter if we shall reap of your Carnal Things?*

Answer;

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Ans. What the Apostle saith in this Case we own; but this is not the Case betwixt us and the Priests aforesaid: for, *First*, Those Priests do not go to War for us, but against us; therefore we ought not to bear the Charge of this their Evil War.

Secondly, They have not planted us a Vineyard or Church unto God; but we being planted of God, they have laboured, and do labour to scatter us by their Cruelties and Oppression, therefore they ought not to have a Reward from us, for whom they do not work.

Thirdly, They do not feed us, who are the Flock of God; but on the contrary, their Works against us have been, and are, to seek to weaken, starve and scatter us from the Fold of our great Shepherd *Christ Jesus*: But Glory to God, through him, he keeps us, who is stronger then them all, by whom we are gathered, preserved, fed and brought to Peace and Rest in him.

Fourthly, These Priests have not sown, nor do sow unto us Spiritual Things, but on the contrary; the Fruits of the Flesh, which is Covetousness, &c. they have sown in a plentiful manner, to our great Wrong and Injury; therefore we cannot own them as Ministers of Christ, nor consent to give our Substance to maintain them as such; but we have true Love to them, and all men, and we could feed them as our Enemies, if we knew they had need thereof, though we cannot feed them as the Ministers of Christ, we not believing them to be such; and that which the more confirms us in our Belief, that they are not such;

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is, their being found in direct Opposition to the Command of Christ, who saith, *freely ye have Received, freely Give*; and contrary to the Doctrine and Example of the Ministers of Christ, both in their Maintenance and Conversation.

Again, the Apostle *Peter* writ unto the Elders of the Church of Christ, saying, *The Elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an Elder, and witness of the Suffering of Christ, and also a Partaker of the Glory that shall be revealed; Feed the Flock of God, which is among you, taking the Oversight thereof, not by Constraint, but willingly; Not for filthy Lucre, but of a Ready Mind; Neither as being Lords over God's Heritage, but being Examples to the Flock*; see 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2, 3.

First, Observe, the Apostle *Peter*, and the rest of the Elders of the Church of Christ were made SUCH by Christ himself, who endued them with Power from on High, for the great Work of the Ministry; and by the same means are all the Elders of the Church of Christ made at this Day.

Secondly, The true Ministers and Elders of the Church of Christ do take the Oversight thereof not by Constraint, but Willingly: God makes them willing to preach *freely*, according to Christ's Command; they do not take the oversight of the Flock for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind. Now, The word *Lucre* signifies *Gain*; and *filthy Lucre* is *Gain ill gotten*: Now that Gain that is gotten in breaking the Command of Christ is not well, but ill gotten; and such is that Gain of the Persons before-mentioned, which is gotten as aforesaid.

Thirdly,

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Thirdly, The true Elders and Ministers of Christ neither were nor are, Lords over God's Heritage, but good Ensamples to the Flock; and because the Persons before-mentioned do not abide in the Doctrine of Christ, neither follow the Doctrine or Example of his holy Apostles and Elders in their Call, Ministry, Maintenance and Conversation, therefore we cannot esteem them the true Ministers and Elders set up by Christ; and therefore we cannot give them of our outward Substance to uphold them as such. The Apostle Paul saith, *There were many in his day, who taught that which they ought not for filthy Lucre's sake*; see Tit. 1. 11. And we have just cause to say there are many such in our day; but the Lord is discovering them daily more and more, and he will bring these their Evil Works to an End, in his appointed Season, which hastens on apace; and in the mean time we are chearfully given up to suffer whatever the Lord permits our Adversaries to inflict upon us for the Exercise of our tender Consciences to him.

These are some of the many Reasons that might be given, why we refuse, and cannot for good Conscience-sake Pay Tythe; but as we have, so we must continue bearing our *Christian*-Testimony (in the Spirit of Christ) against paying of them, as being contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and his blessed Apostles.

An Account of Goods taken from the Peaceable People of God called QUAKERS, in the New-buildings in the City of London, for Tythes, demanded by the Priests in part of the Years 1680, and 81. by virtue of Warrants granted by Patient Ward, then Mayor.

The 11th of the 11th Moneth, called *January*.

TAken from *George Bradford*, Glasier in *Bush-Lane*, in the Parish of *Swithings* in *London*, for 16 s. demanded for two years Tythes for *Richard Owen*, Priest of the said Parish, viz. a Pull-up-Jack, and three Pewter Dishes, the weight of the Pewter, and the Names of the Constable and Collector not known.

Note, *The said George Bradford being now summoned before the Mayor by the aforesaid Priest, complained, that the last time he had distrained from him (for but 1 l. 16 s. demanded) Goods to the value of Six or Seven Pound, and had but 20 s. returned; which the Mayor was pleased to declare, Was contrary to Law, and that he would not suffer it; which is judged might be the occasion of their being (contrary to their wonted Practice) something Moderate now.*

The 7th of the 5th Moneth, called July, 1681.

Taken from *John Osgood* of *White-Heart Court* in *Lumbard-street*, Linnen Draper, for 33 s. 4 d. demanded for Tythes for *Dr Archer* (so called) Priest of *Alhallows Lumbard-street*, by the said Doctor's man, Sixty Ells of Linnen, valued at 9 d. per Ell, and comes to 2 l. 5 s.

Returned l. — s. — d.
0 — 10 — 4

Detained 1 — 14 — 8

Demanded for Tythes 1 — 13 — 4

Taken no more over than 0 — 01 — 4

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The Priests Account to Richard Whitpaine, July 6. 1681.

Goods distrained of Richard Whitpaine, by virtue of my Lord Mayors Warrant, for one Year and Quarters Tythes, due at Lady-day last past to Doctor Elkanas Downes, Rector of the Parish of St. Leonard Eastcheap; and the said House is rated at 11. 2 s. per annum, the whole Tythes amount to 11. 7 s. 6 d.

(viz.) Eighty Six Pound of Pewter } l. s. d.
at 7 d. per Pound } 02—10—02

The Doctor's Tythes is 01—07—06

The Charges 00—12—04

01—19—10

The Goods were appraised at 02—10—02

The Overplus is 00—10—04

An account of what Pewter it was that was distrained from Richard Whitpaine, viz. Eight large Pewter Dishes, four lesser, sixteen large Plates, and two Basons, which if it were to be bought, would cost him about four Pounds.

Note, The 10 s. Overplus was flung into the House of the said Richard Whitpaine, sealed up in a Paper, he having before then refused to receive it.

The 20th day of September, 1681.

Taken from John Beckley of the Liberty of Martins le Grand in London, Perfumer, for 7 s. demanded for one Years Tythes, for Samuel Freeman Priest of the Parish called Anne and Agnes, three Pewter Dishes, weight 9 l. 6½ oz. at 7 d. per Pound, is 5 s. 7 d. and five Bras Candlesticks valued at 5 s.

In all 10—7

Demanded 07—0

Taken more than demanded 03—7

And no Returns made.

This

(3)

This Distress was made by *Francis Brown*, one of the Mayors Officers, and *Henry Wyett*, Constable of the aforesaid Liberty.

Ditto Diem.

Taken from *Richard Townsend* of *Martins le Grand*, aforesaid, by the aforesaid Officer and Constable, for 15 s. demanded for the aforesaid Priest, five large Fishing-Rods, valued at 1 l. 5 s.

Demanded 0—15—0

Taken more than demanded 0—10—0

And no Returns made.

The 7th Month, 1681.

Taken from *William Crouch* of the Parish called *Bennes Grace-Church*, by *John Jesse* of *Ball-Alley* in *Lumbar-d-street*, for 3 l. 18 s. demanded for one year and half Tythes, for *Henry Halsted*, Priest of the aforesaid Parish, and for a pretended Arrears 11 s. 2 d. and Charges 7 s. 4 d. Goods to the value of 4 l. 14 s.

	l.	s.	d.
Demanded	3	18	0
Pretended Arrears	0	11	2
Charges.	0	07	0
	4	16	2

So that according to their pretended Dues, Arrears and Charges, they have taken less than what they make it come to by 0—02—2

The Priests Bill to *William Baker* is as followeth.

October 18. 1681.

Eight Masss distrained for Ministers Tythes, and they were praised at one Pound twelve Shillings, and sold for one Pound twelve Shillings.

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	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Due for a Year and half Tythes, ending at Christmas, 1680. at 15 s. per Year, comes to	1	02	6
For Affidavit	0	00	4
For a Summons	0	01	0
For Distress	0	02	6
For the Warrant	0	03	0
For Portridge	0	00	6
Spent at Praising and Distraining	0	02	0
	<hr/>		
Comes to	1	11	10
	<hr/>		
Returned	0	0	2

Taken by *Thomas Hewit*, Officer, for Priest *Hodshis*, which Goods were bought of the Officer by a Neighbour, and returned to me again, and the Money he paid stopped out of Money he owed to me, without any order, and wholly contrary to my mind.

The 28th of the 8th Month, 1681.

Taken from *John Tyse*, Shoemaker, of the Parish call'd *Ann* and *Agnes*, for 2 *l.* 16 *s.* 10 *d.* demanded for three years and a quarter Tythes, for *Samuel Freeman* Priest, by *Francis Brown* Officer, and a Constable that refused to tell his Name, forty pair of mens Shoes, valued at 7 *l.*

Demanded	2	16	10
Returned eleaven pair of Shoes, valued at	1	14	10
	<hr/>		
Demanded and Returned	4	11	8
	<hr/>		
Taken and detained more than demanded } or returned	2	08	3

Here

Here followeth an Account of some Distresses
that were omitted in the former Impressions that
were printed upon this account.

The 6th of the first Moneth, called March, 1673.

Taken from *William Phillips* by virtue of a Warrant granted
by *James Edwards*, then Mayor, unto *David Burton*, called
Rector of the Parish call'd *Margaret New-Fishstreet*, thirty six Gal-
lons of Brandy, worth 3 s. 8 d. per Gallon, which comes to 6 l.
12 s. for 3 l. 17 s. demanded for Tythes for the aforesaid Priest,
by *John Jesse* of *Ball-Alley* in *Lambard-street*.

Their Account is as followeth.

Thirty six Gallons of Brandy, appraised at 3 s. per Gallon, comes to	3	08	00
Tythes	3	17	00
Charges	0	17	11
In all	4	14	11

No Returns.

Note, That there rests in their hands, according to their own
account, 13 s. 2 ob. Besides the 1 l. 4 s. the Brandy was under
praised at, which would make 1 l. 17 s. 2 ob.

The 14th day of the same Moneth.

Taken from *Richard Cripps* of the aforesaid Parish, for the
aforesaid Priest, by Warrant from the aforesaid Mayor, and by
the aforesaid *John Jesse*, for 3 l. 2 s. 3 d. demanded for Tythes,
50 couple of Fish, valued at 4 l. 16 s. 8 d.

Taken

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Taken	4	16	08
Demanded for Tythes	3	02	03
For Charges	1	00	06
<hr/>			
Demands and Charges	4	02	09

No Returns. So that there rests in their hands 0 13 11

Notwithstanding, the Priest claims 16 *s.* 1 *d.* to be still due to him; by which it may be concluded, that except he hath above or near 20 *s.* more than his Tythes and Charges come to (as in the foregoing case of the *Brandy*) he is not contented. But its hoped, that this, with their other Practices, will tend to the opening that Eye in our neighbour and fellow Citizens, by which they may clearly see (notwithstanding their Pretences of being Gospel Ministers) that they are neither in the Spirit nor Practice of the primitive Ministers, which took the Oversight of the Flock of God, *Not by Constraint, but Willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a Ready Mind; neither as being Lords over Gods Heritage, but being Ensamples to the Flock,*

The 12th of the 9th Month, 1679.

Taken from *William Crouch* of the Parish called *Bennet Grace-Church*, by virtue of a Warrant granted by *Robret Clayton*, then Mayor, unto *Henry Halsted*, Priest of the aforesaid Parish, for one year and a half Tythes, reckoned at 3 *l.* 18 *s.* (by *John Jests* of *Ball-Alley* in *Lumbard-street*) the Goods following.

A peice of Say that cost	1	18	6
But appraised by them at	1	05	0
In Ticking 61 yards at 14 <i>d.</i> per yard, comes to	3	11	2

Which makes at the lowest rate

Demanded for Tythes	3	18	0
Account for Charges	0	15	0
<hr/>			
	4	13	0

Taken more then the Charges and Demands
And no Returns.

0 03 2
¶ Yet

¶ Yet did the Officer the next time make OATH, That there was 11s. 2d. still due. But I desire, that God may give him a Heart to repent of this his Evil, lest that Lake (which all Swearers, as well as Lyars must have their part in) which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second Death, be his Portion.

The 22d of the 4th Moneth, 1680.

Taken from *William Baker*, by Warrant from *Robert Clayton*, Mayor, by *John Jesse* and *Edmund Bowley*, Clerk of the Parish, together with a Constable and a Porter, for 2*l.* 5*s.* demanded for *Dr Aston* (so called) for twelve Quarters Tythes, ending the 25th of the 1st Moneth, 1677. for which they seized from the aforesaid *William Baker* 126 black Coney-Skins, which the the Appraisers valued at 3*l.* 3*s.* A Note of the Charge as followeth:

To the Priest for Tythes	2 <i>l.</i> 05 <i>s.</i> 00 <i>d.</i>
To Charge, Expence and Appraisment	0 14 10

Which Goods, after they had remained in the said Clerks hands above a year, the said *Dr Aston* did deny the taking of them by his order, and ordered they should be delivered back to me, which was accordingly done, without demanding any thing a Charges.

Note, This account we thought meet to Print, being willing to give all men their Due, as well in speaking in the commendation of their Moderation, where it appears, as to manifest their Oppression, when they take Goods to double the Demand, and sell them at wider Rates, and bring a large Account of Charges, delighting more to speak of their Moderation than their Oppression.

T H E E N D.

(6)

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Taken	4	16	08
Demanded for Tythes	3	02	03
For Charges	1	00	06
Demands and Charges	4	02	09

No Returns. So that there rests in their hands 0 13 11

Notwithstanding, the Priest claims 16 *s.* 1 *d.* to be still due to him; by which it may be concluded, that except he hath above or near 20 *s.* more than his Tythes and Charges come to (as in the foregoing case of the *Brandy*) he is not contented. But its hoped, that this, with their other Practices, will tend to the opening that Eye in our neighbour and fellow Citizens, by which they may clearly see (notwithstanding their Pretences of being Gospel Ministers) that they are neither in the Spirit nor Practice of the primitive Ministers, which took the Oversight of the Flock of God, *Not by Constraint, but Willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a Ready Mind; neither as being Lords over Gods Heritage, but being Ensamples to the Flock.*

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A piece of Say that cost	1	18	6
But appraised by them at	1	05	0
In Ticking 61 yards at 14 <i>d.</i> per yard, comes to	3	11	2

Which makes at the lowest rate 4 16 2

Demanded for Tythes	3	18	0
Account for Charges	0	15	0
	4	13	0

Taken more then the Charges and Demands
And no Returns. 0 03 2
¶ Yet

¶ Yet did the Officer the next time make OATH, That there was 11s. 2d. still due. But I desire, that God may give him a Heart to repent of this his Evil, lest that Lake (which all Swearers, as well as Lyars must have their part in) which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second Death, be his Portion.

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T H E E N D.

**BOOKS Printed and Sold by Andrew Soame
Shop in Devonshire-Buildings, neere
Bishops-gate, viz.**

**The Great Case of Tythes, by Francis
Price 6d.**

**Tythes Cased by Civil, by William
Price 6d.**

**The Foundation of Tythes, by
Elwood. Price bound 3s.**

**A Testimony against Tything among
by Richard Richardson. Price 10d.**

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monies of Gentiles, Jews and Christians, by
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